

THE PEACE POST

February 2007

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, unto life everlasting. Amen.



FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR MESSER

“Repentant Season or Seasoned Repentance?”

On Wednesday, February 21, we will begin the season of Lent. Lent is a forty day Christian festival beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. We skip Sundays when we count the forty days, because

Sundays commemorate the Resurrection of our Lord. Thus, Sundays are *in* the season of Lent, but not *of* the season of Lent.

Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance; a season for reflection and taking stock. Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days, where He fasted and was tempted by Satan.

Lent prepares us for the observance of our Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection. It is a time for us to recognize our sinful condition and our need for a Savior. Ash Wednesday serves to initiate this recognition in us. The ashes are a reminder that we are “dust and to dust we shall return” (Gen. 3:19). They remind us of our mortality, cursed as it is by sin, of our limits, of what we are, and how greatly we need God's mercy in Christ.

For many Christians, Lent is not observed at all. For many others, it is observed as nothing more than a time to give up some personal vice or habit. You will hear Christians say things like, “I'm giving up chocolate (coffee, meat, beer, etc.) for Lent.” While giving something up we love may be a worthy sacrifice to make during this season, such sacrifices do not really get at the heart of Lent.

Lent should involve a deeper commitment than the giving up of a personal vice or habit. It is a time for self-examination in light of the Ten Commandments; a time for the giving up of sinful behavior; a time for personal housecleaning. It is a time for commitment to the new life of Christ be-

gun in baptism; a time for disciplined study of Scripture and a time for growing in faith. Thus, simply giving up something you love without the kind of self-examination and commitment just mentioned will not heighten your awareness of sin and your desperate need of the salvation won for you by Jesus Christ.

My friends, Lent stands at the door and knocks. The question is: Will you let Lent in? Will you let Lent have its way with you or will you have your way with it? Will Lent be a season of repentance for you or will you season your repentance to make it a bit easier to swallow? Will this season of Lent just pass you by or will you use this forty days to examine yourselves?

Dear friends in Christ, I pray that you will take time to contemplate these tough, but important, questions. I pray that this Lenten season will be life-changing for you; that you will use this season to retreat into the wilderness with Jesus. I pray that, through self-examination, you will be lead to a deeper recognition of your sinful condition and of your need for the salvation that comes through faith in Christ. I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities the Lord gives you to come into His presence and to grow in the faith He has graciously given you. You can do so by joining us on Wednesday evenings throughout Lent for Service, by having daily devotions in your home, by daily prayer and Scripture reading, and by making the commitment to join us for Adult Bible Study on Sundays.

May this Lent be for you a truly repentant season and not one of seasoned repentance. In Jesus' Name. Amen!

Your Servant in Christ,
Pastor Messer

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PEACE LUTHERAN LIBRARY



Donations are always welcomed:

If you are thinking about donating one or more books to our library and are not sure what to be looking for, we have a "wish" list of suggestions in the church office. Prices and books can also be found in the CPH catalog, also in the church office.



We would like to encourage people to use our Church Library more often. We will be encouraging people to read books and share a book review with the congregation via the monthly newsletter. If you have read a book from our library that you enjoyed, or that inspired you, and you would like to share it, please contact Beth Brostrom or Coaline Luplow.

PYG NEWS

February Events:

- PYG Meeting - Sunday, Feb. 18, 12-2pm
- Fat Tuesday Fiesta [see below] - Feb. 20, 6-8pm
- Classic Movie Night [see below] - Feb. 24, 6-10pm

Greetings in Christ;

We are still reorganizing and setting up for 2007. We had a good start with our January meeting. The youth and guides had a very open and active bible study discussion on Ephesians 6:10-20 - "The Armor of God".

Also at the meeting, plans for a fund raising dinner on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday was set. Please join and support us at a 'Fat Tuesday Fiesta', a Mexican dinner and fellowship. A free-will donation will help raise funds for youth activities and events.

We are also planning another Classic Movie Night on Saturday, Feb. 20th. Our theme this month is Mystery. All members of Peace are welcome to join us for an evening of Films and fellowship.

The youth were also invited by Zion Lutheran in Mt. Pleasant to a retreat near Loon Lake in April. Watch the PYG board for more on this and other activities.

May the Spirit of the Lord be with you.
Jonathan Penzien, Youth Leader

2007 LENTEN DINNERS

Wednesdays in Lent - 6:00 pm

There will again be dinners preceding the Wednesday Evening services during Lent. Unless otherwise indicated in the bulletin, these will be Potluck dinners. You bring a dish to pass and your own table service.

These dinners will begin with a Pre-Lenten dinner sponsored by Peace Youth Group:

Tuesday, February 20 -



"Fat Tuesday" Fiesta Dinner
6:00 - 8:00 pm (donations welcome)
Sponsored by PYG (Fund-raiser)

Wednesday, March 7 - S.A.L.T.

Soup/Salad Dinner



Want something included in "The Peace Post" next month? Email Beth or Pastor Messer (addresses on back page) by February 21 with your item. Also, call or email them anytime with your feedback and/or ideas!

Synopsis of Church Council Minutes

Date: January 9, 2006

Call To Order & Opening Prayer - President Jakolat called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Pastor Messer conducted the opening prayer.

Roll Call – Members present: Vern Jakolat, Miguel Ortiz, Megan Brown, Carol Zeile, Bill Brostrom, Sharyn Greening, Larry Elliott, Dick Kohler. Members absent: Coaline Luplow, Dave Zeile. Non-voting members present: Rev. Thomas Messer. Other: Beth Brostrom.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – Motion by Council member Elliott, supported by Council member Brostrom to approve the minutes from the meeting of December 5, 2006. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports – The following reports were presented and received into record: Pastor’s Report, Treasurer’s Report, Board of Elders’ Report, Board of Trustees’ Report, Board of Christian Education Report, Board of Evangelism Report, Ladies Guild Report, Peace Youth Group Report, Constitution & Bylaws Report.

Old Business -

2007 Budget – The Council discussed the proposed budget for 2007. The Council adopted a resolution requiring the Peace Youth Group to show accountability for designated funds. Council member Greening requested guidance from the Council for use of memorial funds for Jon Greening. Motion made by Council member Greening, supported by Vice President Ortiz to approve the proposed 2007 budget.

Sale of Property – Council member Brostrom had no new developments to report.

Use of Parking Lot for Construction Vehicles – Council member Brostrom had no new developments to report.

New Business

Council Meeting Packets – Secretary Brown volunteered to assemble meeting packets prior to each monthly meeting to include informational and action items. The Council agreed that this will improve meeting efficiency.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

Motion made by Council member Greening, supported by Council member Ortiz to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm. Pastor Messer conducted the closing prayer.

Proposed minutes respectfully submitted,
Megan Brown, Secretary

Synopsis of Special Church Council Minutes

Date: January 21, 2006

Call To Order & Opening Prayer - President Jakolat called the meeting to order at 11:03am. The prayers of Divine Service served as both the opening and closing prayers of the meeting.

Roll Call – Members present: Vern Jakolat, Miguel Ortiz, Megan Brown, Carol Zeile, Bill Brostrom, Sharyn Greening, Larry Elliott, Dick Kohler, Dave Zeile. Members absent: Coaline Luplow, Miguel Ortiz.

New Business

Motion made by Council member Elliott, supported by Council member Greening to adopt the resolution authorizing Vern Jakolat, Council President, and/or Carol Zeile, Council Treasurer, to sign checks, drafts, orders of withdrawal and other necessary papers or documents as required by the Peace Lutheran Church Council and/or Voters Assembly. Motion passed unanimously.

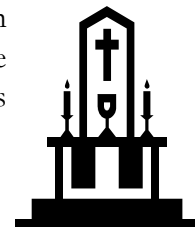
Adjournment & Closing Prayer

Motion made by Council member D. Zeile, supported by Council member Kohler to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 11:05am.

Proposed minutes respectfully submitted,
Megan Brown, Secretary

LADIES & ALTAR GUILD INFO

- **LADIES GUILD MEETING:** Guild will meet Monday, February 5 at 7:00 pm. Hostess: Coaline Luplow
All ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our guild meetings; if you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you can be a member of the guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the guild.
- **LADIES GUILD PRAYER CHAIN:** The Ladies Guild has a prayer chain in place. If you wish to be included in the prayer chain as a caller, see Marlene Wiltshire. If you wish to add yourself or someone else to the prayers, call Marlene Wiltshire (463-4101).
- **ALTAR GUILD DUTY:** February - Beth Brostrom; March - Carol Zeile; April - Carol Zeile
- **ALTAR FLOWERS:** There is a flower calendar for 2007 posted on the fellowship bulletin board. If you wish to place flowers on the altar some time during the year, fill in your name and/or contact Marilyn Oswald. A bouquet usually lasts about one (1) month and the cost is about \$25.



UPCOMING COFFEE HOSTESSES:



February

4 - Cheryl Henry
11 - Lois Ramsey
18 - Sharyn Greening/Megan Brown
25 - Janice Sager

March

4 - Lisa Messer
11 - Cheryl Kuehnlein
18 - Trina Palmer
25 - Carol Durst

April

1 - Jenny Baughman
8 - Easter (no Coffee)
15 - Carol Zeile
22 - Jo Wendt
29 - Coaline Luplow

S.A.L.T. NOTES

1. **WECOMING NEW VISITORS** - As part of our outreach program, the S.A.L.T. Committee welcomes new visitors by delivering cookies to their homes after their first visit. We have had tremendous feedback from people we visited and are encouraged to continue the program. We are in need of cookie bakers and cookie takers. There is no obligation to be involved in discussion, we just deliver the cookies with a welcome brochure and a friendly greeting. A sign-up sheet is posted on the S.A.L.T. bulletin board in the fellowship hall. We would appreciate your help either with baking or delivering.



Food Drive

2. **FOOD DRIVE** to provide foods for families and seniors of Gratiot County is being conducted by the S.A.L.T. Committee. This is an ongoing program coordinated through the Commission on Aging and the Department of Human Services. Please help us help these people by bringing nonperishable food donations and placing them in the RED bucket at the entrance of the fellowship hall. Suggested foods are listed on the poster. Questions? Speak with Lisa Messer or Dorothy Trgina.

3. **LENTEN SOUP AND SALAD SUPPER FUND RAISER—Wednesday, March 7.** Funds will be used for future outreach events for 2007. Watch bulletins and the S.A.L.T. bulletin board for more information.



A LENTEN PREVIEW

Lenten Midweek Sermon Series

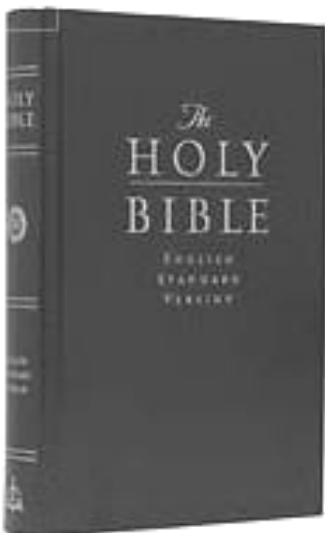
“COMING HOME FROM EXILE: THE EXODUSES OF THE SCRIPTURES”

Ash Wednesday	Feb. 21	“The Ashes of Paradise Lost” (Genesis 3)
2nd Wed. in Lent	Feb. 28	“Abram’s Exodus Before the Exodus” (Genesis 12:10-20)
3rd Wed. in Lent	Mar. 7	“Jacob the Heel Comes Home” (Genesis 28:10-17)
4th Wed. in Lent	Mar. 14	“Out of Egypt I Have Called My Son” (Exodus 14)
5th Wed. in Lent	Mar. 21	“Exile and Return from Our Babylons” (Ezra 1:1-4)
6th Wed. in Lent	Mar. 28	“The Promise of a Cosmopolitan Exodus” (Isaiah 11:11-16)
Maundy Thursday	Apr. 5	“The New and Better Passover Meal of Meals” (Ex. 12:1-14)
Good Friday	Apr. 6	“Christ, the Firstborn, Is Sacrificed” (Exodus 12:21-32)

Lenten Midweek and Holy Week Service Schedule

Ash Wednesday	Feb. 21	7:00 p.m.	Divine Service 1 (w/Imposition of Ashes)
2nd Wed. in Lent	Feb. 28	7:00 p.m.	Service of Prayer and Preaching
3rd Wed. in Lent	Mar. 7	7:00 p.m.	Service of Prayer and Preaching
4th Wed. in Lent	Mar. 14	7:00 p.m.	Service of Prayer and Preaching
5th Wed. in Lent	Mar. 21	7:00 p.m.	Service of Prayer and Preaching
6th Wed. in Lent	Mar. 28	7:00 p.m.	Service of Prayer and Preaching
Palm Sunday	Apr. 1	9:30 a.m.	Divine Service 1 (w/Procession of Palms)
Maundy Thursday	Apr. 5	7:00 p.m.	Divine Service 1 (w/HC & Stripping of Altar)
Good Friday	Apr. 6	12:00 p.m.	Noonday Sacred Service (w/Holy Communion)
		7:30 p.m.	The Office of Tenebrae (w/Sounding of Strepitus)
Easter Sunday	Apr. 8	9:30 a.m.	The Resurrection of Our Lord (DS 1 w/HC)

LOOKING FOR DONORS!



Since we have switched over to *Lutheran Service Book*, we are now using the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible. The ESV is a much stronger and more faithful translation than the New International Version (NIV) we were using. It will take a little while to get used to this change, but it will be well worth it in the long run.

In order to complete our transition to the ESV, we would like to purchase a couple of cases of ESV Pew Bibles to replace the NIV Bibles we currently have on hand, so that we can use them during Bible Study, Sunday School, etc.

A case of 24 ESV Pew Bibles costs \$189.60 + shipping. We would like to purchase at least 2 cases, so our total cost would be \$379.20 + shipping. If you have the means and would like to help us fill this need, please fill out the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. We are looking for 20 donors to give \$20.00 each. Of course, if you want to give a larger amount, we will certainly accept it to meet our goal faster or to go towards the purchase of more Bibles.

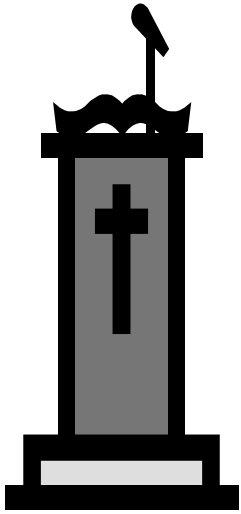
ASK THE PASTOR

“ON MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS”

Q: Is making the sign of the cross a Roman Catholic thing?

A: Sadly, many Christians, including Lutherans, have come to believe that making the sign of the cross is a practice exclusive to Roman Catholicism

“Making the sign of the cross is an excellent reminder of who we are as baptized Christians.”



and should not be practiced by Christians in other denominations. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Making the sign of the cross is an ancient custom which was being practiced in the Christian Church already in the first century, long before Roman Catholics came on the scene.

At the time of the Reformation, our Lutheran forefathers continued to practice this ancient custom because it was a good practice begun by our earliest brothers and sisters in the faith. In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther advises us to make the sign of the cross before our morning and evening prayers.

When we are baptized, the sign of the cross is made upon our foreheads and upon our hearts to mark us as children of God redeemed by Christ the crucified. Making the sign of the cross is an excellent reminder of who we are as baptized Christians. It is a wonderful practice which helps us to recall the forgiveness, faith, and salvation God lovingly bestowed upon us when we were baptized into His family.

It is unfortunate that wonderful customs like this one have fallen into disuse among Christians for fear that it is a “Roman Catholic” thing. What is even sadder is that we Lutherans have allowed other Christians to influence us into discontinuing practices such as this one. By doing so, we have moved further and further away from our Lutheran roots.

The point of the Reformation was not to start a brand new church, but to restore the Christian Church to its historic and true origins. Our Lutheran forefathers were concerned with distancing themselves from the false theology which had crept into the Roman Catholic Church, not in ridding themselves of the faithful traditions and customs just because Roman Catholics practiced them. In other words, we Lutherans never lived by the motto, “If Roman Catholics do it, we won’t!” That was the motto of the false teachers who came after Luther and began the Reformed and Anabaptist branches of Christendom. Luther himself declared these false teachers to be “of a different spirit!” Why should we allow these “different spirits” to influence us into discontinuing the ancient customs of the Christian Church? We shouldn’t! Doing so is akin to going to a car mechanic when we need medical attention. It’s absurd!

With all of that said, the practice of making the sign of the cross is, by no means, a requirement of Christians. There is no Scriptural mandate that tells us that we have to make the sign of the cross.

However, since it is a beautiful custom which links us to our earliest Christian brothers and sisters and our Lutheran

forefathers, it behooves us to retain it.

For this reason, the Liturgy Committee that worked on our new LSB hymnals made it a point to emphasize this custom in the hope that it would, once again, become a common practice among us Lutherans. At the beginning of every Divine Service, the following rubric (note) is found: “*The sign of the cross + may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*” Then, at the various points in the liturgy where it is customary to make the sign of the cross (Invocation, Absolution, last phrase of the Creed, Benediction), they have included a cross (+) to remind us to make the sign of the cross at that point. (It should be noted that it is also customary to make the sign of the cross upon receiving Holy Communion as well, which is not indicated in the hymnal).

Now that we know longer have to wonder when we should make the sign of the cross, the only question that remains is: How do we do it? The traditional way in which Lutherans have made the sign of the cross is to bring together the thumb and first two fingers (to symbolize the Holy Trinity), then touch the forehead lightly, then move down to the middle of the chest, then touch the left shoulder and finally the right shoulder.

I pray that what is written here adequately answers the question and provides some good “food for thought” for all of you who have ever wondered about making the sign of the cross. It is NOT a “Roman Catholic thing”; it is a CHRISTIAN thing!

In Christ,

Pastor Messer

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School is offered each week for grades K-8.
- Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.** for all confirmed members of Peace and adult guests. We are currently engaged in a detailed study of **Revelation**.

Youth Confirmation Class

- Youth Confirmation Class takes place each Thursday at 5:30 p.m.



“Life With God” Adult Confirmation/Information Class

- We will schedule a class in the future when the need presents itself. If you ever know of anyone who may be interested in learning about what we believe or joining our congregation, please see Pastor Messer.

Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study takes place **Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** All men and women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Guests are always welcome, too. We are currently engaged in a detailed study of the **Gospel of John**. Please plan on joining us soon.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday to:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 - Sierra Luplow | 12 - Yvonne Elenbaas |
| 2 - Samantha Hoffman | 21 - Coaline Luplow |
| 5 - Connie Cook | 21 - Eric Lovejoy |
| 6 - Dorothy Wisner | 24 - Melanie Penzien |
| 9 - Kecia Gustavison | 24 - Amber Rosalez |
| 9 - Jamison Warne | 24 - Jeffery Sager |
| | 28 - Javier Rosalez, Jr. |

Happy Anniversary to:

- 18 - Leland & Marilyn Oswald
- 19 - Barb & Ernest Komar



If we ever miss your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so that we can update our records.



EUCHRE NIGHT!

Our next gathering will be **FRIDAY, February 16 at 6:30 pm**. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Everyone is welcome to come and have fun playing the great game of euchre. Please bring a dish to pass. See you there!

TABLE TALK



Our next Table Talk will be held on **Thursday, February 15 at 7:00 p.m.** Come and join us for what are always informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. We hope to see you there!

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(As of January 26)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 182

Confirmed - 140

Official Acts:

None

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 0

Financial Report

YTD Receipts: \$6,134.21

Budgeted YTD: \$5,985.00

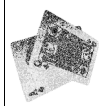
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February 2007

Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

January 28	January 29	January 30	January 31	1	2	3
Epiphany IV 8:30 - Choir Rehearsal 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - QUARTLY VOTERS ASSEMBLY		9:30—Together in the Word	3:30 - Girl Scouts 8:00 - Choir Rehearsal	5:00 pm— <i>WW</i> 5:30 pm—Confirmation Class		
4 Epiphany V 8:30 - Choir Rehearsal 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—SS/BC	5 7:00 pm—Ladies Guild Hostess: C. Luplow	6 <i>No Together in the Word (Pastor at Winkel)</i> 7:00 pm Council mtg.	7 3:30 - Girl Scouts 8:00 - Choir Rehearsal	8 5:00 pm— <i>WW</i> 5:30 pm—Confirmation Class	9	10
11 Epiphany VI 8:00—Elders Mtg. 8:30 - Choir Rehearsal 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—SS/BC 12:15 pm - Greek Class	12	13 9:30—Together in the Word 6:00 pm - Bd. OFEd. Mtg. 6:30 pm—S.A.L.T. mtg.	14 3:30 - Girl Scouts 8:00 - Choir Rehearsal	15 5:00 pm— <i>WW</i> 5:30 pm - Confirmation Class 7:00 pm—Table Talk 8:00 - Trustees Meeting	16 6:30 pm— <i>Elchre Night</i>	17
18 Transfiguration of Our Lord 8:30 - Choir Rehearsal 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—SS,BC 12:00 - PYG Meeting 12:15 pm - Greek Class	19	20 9:30—Together in the Word 6:00 - 8:00 pm - PYG Fiesta Dinner	21 Ash Wednesday 3:30 - Girl Scouts 6:00 - Potluck Dinner 7:00 - Divine Service 8:00 - Choir Rehearsal	22 5:00 pm— <i>WW</i> 5:30 pm - Confirmation Class	23	24 6:00 pm - PYG Classic Movie Night
25 1st Sunday in Lent 8:30 - Choir Rehearsal 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—SS,BC 12:15 pm - Greek Class	26	27 9:30—Together in the Word	28 3:30 - Girl Scouts 6:00 - Potluck Dinner 7:00 - Lent II Service 8:00 - Choir Rehearsal	March 1 5:00 pm— <i>WW</i> 5:30—Confirmation Class	March 2	March 3



SERVING IN FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY	<u>ACOLYTES</u>	<u>ORGANIST</u>	<u>ELDER</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
3 - 9:30 am	Kelsey Gensler Sarah Messer	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Leland Oswald James Sager	Larry & Andrea Elliott
11 - 9:30 am	Samantha Messer Lauren Penzien	Beth Brostrom	Dave Zeile	Miguel Ortiz Burt Henry	Vern & Mary Jakolat
18 - 9:30 am	Tyrel Harwager Alex Henry	Mary Jakolat	Don Reithel	Vern Jakolat Curt Oswald	Burt & Cheryl Henry
21 - 7:00 pm (Ash Wednesday)	Jordan Henry Kelsey Gensler	Mary Jakolat	Don Reithel	Vern Jakolat Curt Oswald	
25 - 9:30 am	Jessica Oswald Melanie Penzien	Beth Brostrom	Larry Elliott	Bill Brostrom Chris Brown	LeRoy & Maxine Isaksson
28 - 7:00 pm (Lent II)	CJ Oswald Sara Messer	Beth Brostrom	Larry Elliott	Bill Brostrom Chris Brown	
MARCH					
4 - 9:30 am	Phillip Schafer Alex Henry	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Bill Hendrick Jon Penzien	Dick & Joyce Kohler
7 - 7:00 pm (Lent III)	Samantha Messer Tyrel Harwager	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Bill Hendrick Jon Penzien	

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men” (Eph. 6:7)

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Pastor's Cell: 989-289-3908
E-mail: pastor@peacealma.org

We are on the Web!
www.peacealma.org

The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.